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## NOTES AND NEWS.

HERR BÜTTIKOFER, zoologist and curator of the Royal Museum in Leyden, who has, in his "*Reisebilder aus Liberia*," given us the most complete study of any defined region of Central Africa that we have seen, says that among the Liberian hunters it is a common report that the older individuals of the chimpanzees defend themselves when attacked with cudgels, which, if true, would seem to throw doubt upon the statement sometimes made that the tools of the lower animals are invariably organic, while those of man are mechanical.

The cleared spaces which one occasionally comes across in the African forests are, upon the same authority, used by the chimpanzees to build immense bonfires of dried wood gathered from the neighborhood. When the pile is completed one of the chimpanzees begins to blow at the pile as if blowing the fire. He is immediately joined by others, and eventually by the whole company, and the blowing is kept up until their tongues hang from their mouths, when they sit around it upon their haunches with their elbows on their knees and holding up their hands to the imaginary blaze. In wet weather they frequently sit in this way for hours together. The native races invariably sit upon their heels.

The chimpanzee is considered above all other beasts, and no one will eat it, as it is too much like man, while the smaller monkeys are generally eaten. I have, says Herr Büttikofer, more than once in the dark forest just escaped killing a negro for a baboon, and the im-

pression made upon me by the human expressions of a dying chimpanzee was so great that I have never forgotten it, and, with one or two exceptions, I have never shot at them since.

Büttikofer occasionally employed in hunting young negro boys, whose natural senses were so acute that, like scenting dogs, they could discover game in the dark, and whose sharp eye-sight and hearing enabled them to see or hear the least movement.

The devil dances of the aborigines, with their frantic, mad life and noise, deafening drums, and the shrieking songs of the perspiring dancers, lasting for several days and nights, reminded him of the meeting of a village church association in Holland.

A settlement of Americo-Liberians, original immigrants from the United States or their descendants, on the Mahfa river, has reverted to aboriginal habits and has abandoned all clothing except the loincloth. Mr. Warner, son of the former President of Liberia, upon the death of his wife and the inheritance of his father's property, established a native town and maintains a harem of several native wives living in the aboriginal condition. Warner, a younger son, was cook and washerwoman in my employ, preferring these occupations to that of a farmer.

In the house of Clark, a native "Christian chief," was a fetich, and over his door a motto in Arabic, probably from the Koran. This man professed Christianity, was particularly educated at a Christian mission, had two sons there, and was a polygamist. Clark knew how to reconcile feticism and polygamy with Christianity. Beside the Clarks, the grigri or medicine man practiced his charms, and an old Mandenga Mohammedan recited his prayers and sang his Allah-il-Allah. Büttikofer concludes that Liberia is a land of the greatest religious and social freedom.

At Clark's village, in the evening during a great war dance and amid the deafening noises of drums and a mock fight, Clark appeared riding on a man's back, who had his arms around the waist of another who had reins in his mouth, the remarkable fact being that no one present had ever seen a man on horseback.

The Veis, an aboriginal Liberian tribe, only count to 100, and, as a rule, the other natives only to 20. European contact has given some of the tribes the word hondo, signifying one hundred. It is a remarkable fact that the Pessas, a tribe which hardly comes in contact with Europeans or Americo-Liberians, has a decimal, instead of the common vigesimal system.

The state of culture of the aboriginal population is not as low as

is imagined. The Veis have an alphabet, and in writing use a reed. The Golas are mighty and powerful, warlike and cunning; the Busis farmers and weavers, having large markets and strongly fortified villages; the Mandengas skillful in leather-work, good smelters, smiths, farmers, and weavers; but in the centuries which have passed since Central Africa was first known to Europeans little change has taken place. The first or oldest account of these particular peoples is by a Dutchman named Dapper, some two hundred years ago, and I could, says Büttikofer, in a descriptive account of them, repeat his language, word for word.

It is the custom of the tribes on the Mahfa to remove the viscera from the abdomen of the slain, and cutting off the hands and feet to put them in their place. Of two Liberian traders (Americo-Africans) going up the Mahfa, one was sold into slavery and the other killed, disemboweled, and decapitated. On a hunting expedition "I found," says Büttikofer, "six or eight skeletons treated in this way lying in a brook."

The natives believe in a system of rewards and punishments, and in the immortality of the soul. Exactly what they believe of the future state it is impossible to find out. The souls of the dead are ever present, and if earnestly called up in dreams will appear. The belief in good or bad spirits is universal, and they are always about, ready to be propitiated by sacrifices and charms. The fetich or grigri itself is not the subject of prayer or adoration; at the same time they have great faith in charms. God's judgment is of great importance to the natives when they cannot prove an *alibi*. A decoction of sasswood is used to detect persons guilty of charming or bewitching others. The result is to make the natives fatalists.

On an island in Cestos bay there is a mausoleum of native chiefs, the bodies laid away in coffins above the ground. The coffin of King Ban-Flan, the brother of the present King Davis, recently deceased, rests upon a smooth place upon the ground covered with cloth, and upon it were spread out iron dishes, plates, bottles, cups, and herring boxes. Here the soul of Ban-Flan holds guardianship over his living successor, the dishes being the symbol of life for one generation. When King Davis dies the dishes will be broken, King Ban-Flan's coffin put into the bush, and its place taken by that of King Davis.

In pulling through the dangerous surf along the coast the natives pour out a libation to the gods, as, no doubt, did the Carthaginians, their predecessors on this shore 2,500 years ago.